

A
F U N E R A L
S E R M O N

Upon the DEATH of Mrs. *Urith
Bunchley*, Daughter to Sir *Austin
Palgrave*, Bart. who Departed this
Life May the 21st.

Preached at
CLAVERING in *ESSEX*,
May the 24th, 1708.

Published at the Request of several of
Her RELATIONS.

By a PRESBYTER of the Church of
E N G L A N D.

L O N D O N:

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A
T H E
S E R M O N



Upon the Death of
George, Duke of
Cambridge, and
the Duke of
Buccleugh, the
second son of
King George the
Third.

By
C H A R L E S
May the 24th, 1708.

Printed by
J. B. R. 1708.

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JOB xiv. 14.

If a Man die, shall he live again? All the Days of my appointed time will I wait till my Change come.

SO great a Power and Dominion do the Temptations of the World generally gain over us; So enamour'd are we, and fond of the Objects of Sense, that we very seldom allow ourselves time to reflect upon a future State. We are as busy and intent upon the trifling and precarious Satisfaction of this present Life, as if we never thought of a removal hence: As if it were good for us to fix our Tabernacle here, and this dwelling Place were never to sink into Rubbish and Ruins. Altho', when we compose our selves to sleep, we, every Night have an Emblem and Representation of our lying down in a Bed of Earth, yet no sooner does the Sun arise, but we appear as if no such Reflection had pass'd: We seem as brisk and gay as he, when he cometh, as a Bridegroom out of his Chamber, and rejoyceth as a Giant to run his course. Whosoever takes a view of the World, he will find Men very busy in their several temporal Vocations and Employments; as earnest upon the Affairs of their present Pleasure or Profit, as if this were all that they are concern'd in. But how few Minutes are allow'd for the great and important Business of Thought and Contemplation! How many Days do some Men waste in the pursuit of their Vanities, in gratifying their carnal and corrupt Affections who think much, if may be so often as one in seven, or even one Hour in that Day, to enter into their Clo-

sets, and commune with their own Hearts! as if Religion were a Thing not fit to be heeded till the evil Days come, and the years draw nigh, wherein we shall say, *we have no pleasure in them.* People seldom think of saving their Souls in the next Life, till their Bodies are given over for lost with respect to this. But is the great concern of purifying the Soul, and preparing it for the glorious Mansions of Eternal Light, fit to be protracted and put off to the Sighs and Groans of our last and utmost Gasp? How can we think our selves in a proper Case to quit this earthy Tabernacle, if, before that begins to decay, we have made no Provision for a better and more lasting Habitation? Where Purity and Holiness, without which *no Man shall see the Lord,* are the great Business of our Lives, what Reason have we to think that the faint Repetition of a Lord have Mercy on me, or a melancholy Look cast up to Heaven, will atone for a whole Life of Carelessness and Negligence? Why should we imagine that God will accept of a Day or two in our Sickness spent in Devotion, when the Business of our whole Lives, is, to do him Service: No. If we think that the account which the Scripture gives us of a Resurrection, and Judgment to come, is not a meer Fiction; if we really believe that Christ shall come to judge both quick and dead, let us act suitably to such a belief. Let us live such holy and careful Lives as will become and adorn our Christian Profession. *If a Man die, shall he, &c.*

1st. Then, I shall endeavour to shew the certainty of another State after this, and that, *if a Man die, he shall live again.*

2^{dly}. I shall persuade you, from the truth of this Proposition, to be in continual Preparation against the great Day of Account, and all the Days of your appointed Time to wait till your Change come. 3^{dly}.

3dly. I shall briefly apply my self to the Occasion of our present meeting. And 1st. *If a Man die, he shall live again.* This Life is only a State of Trial or Probation in order to a better.

We find that God maketh his Sun to shine indifferently and promiscuously here, upon the good and bad; and sendeth his rain alike *on the just, and on the unjust.* With regard to the Things of this World, we find it often happen alike to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not. Nay the way of the wicked sometimes prospers better than His, who feareth an Oath. This might startle our weak Reason, and make us inclinable to question the Justice or Providence of the Almighty. *Are not his Ways equal?* Why then are the ungodly in such Prosperity? Why are they seen to flourish like a Bay-tree, when the righteous is in calamitous Circumstances, render'd the Off-scouring of all Things, and subjected to Adversity and Oppression? How shall this be thought consistent with the Notion of a God whose Judgments are right, and who rewardeth every Man according to his Works? This indeed were very strange and unaccountable, were a Man to have no Being beyond the Grave. But all these Things are set in their true light, and reconcil'd with the Justice of God by the glorious Gospel of Christ *that Day-spring which from on High hath visited us:* There we are told that they are Blessed who mourn here, for they shall be comforted hereafter. Whereas the ungodly Man who pleases himself in his short-liv'd Vanities, shall one Day find the end of his Mirth to be Heaviness; when he shall, in vain, bemoan his Folly *with weeping and gnashing of Teeth.* Dives may enjoy those which he calls his *good Things*, for a time; and despise the indigent and needy *Lazarus* at his Door: But he shall want a drop of Water, when the other is in *Abraham's Bosom.* The great Lord of the Harvest

will permit the Tares and the Wheat to grow together for a while ; but at the last he'll make a plain and evident Distinction, by gathering the one into his Garner, and burning up the other with unquenchable Fire. The different Conditions of the godly and the wicked are deliver'd to us in the most expresse terms imaginable. Since then after a Man dies, he does not cease to be, but shall certainly live again, we have the highest Reason to consider what Reception we are likely to meet with, in another World. We shall be happy or miserable for ever, according to our Behaviour here ; and if, by our Folly and indiscretion, we run our selves into utter Ruin and Destruction, it will be too late to think of a Recovery hereafter, or of redeeming the Time, when the Night cometh, wherein no Man can work ! If the Tree fall toward the South, or toward the North ; *in the Place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.* Did we indeed think that there were no Life after this, as we should have nothing, on the one hand, to deter us from the commission of evil, so neither should we, on the other hand, have any Spur or incitement to the Practice of Religion. If after the manner of Men, says St. Paul, *I have fought with Beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not ? let us eat and drink for to morrow we die.* (1 Cor. 15. 32) As if he had said, If this Life puts a final period to our Being, then may the luxurious, the riotous Person indulge in his Debauchery and Sensuality. What restraint can he have to stop him in the Career of his Vice ? Who can persuade him not to walk in the Way of Heart, and in the Sight of his Eyes, if he imagines *that for all these things God will not bring him into Judgment ?* And, on the other side, if there be no reward for the righteous, no State of Recompence and Retribution for the piously persevering Christian, why should we deny our selves, and take up the Cross ?
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why should we be ready to part with all the Comforts of the World, and endure Distress and Persecution, even to the Death, for the sake of a crucify'd Lord, if after all our Sufferings we must never expect to reign with him in Glory? Why *have I fought with Beasts at Ephesus*, says the Apostle; *Why have I stood in jeopardy every Hour*, and offer'd my self for a prey to cruel Beasts, and more savage and barbarous Men, and all this, for the sake of the Gospel, and in Expectation of a glorious Immortality, if I must have an end of Being when Death closes up mine Eyes? *If we have hope in this life only*, says he, *we are of all Men most miserable*. That is, the Holy and Religious Man is sadly cheated and deluded, if after he has been contented to bear the miseries of the World, to undergo the Scoffs and injurious Treatment of the wicked and prophane, there be no distinction made at last betwixt him and them; but they both lie down in the Dust together, and shall never again have any more Perception than the Clods that cover them. But that the Case is really far otherwise, we have a very comfortable Assurance; *We know that this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on Immortality*. Our great Redeemer, the first Fruits of them that slept, did declare, that if the Son of Man were lifted up, he would draw all Men unto him. And we doubt not but he can and will change our vile Bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.

The profligate and Atheistical Person who is mightily scrupulous and will not be induc'd to believe the Gospel, may cavil at, and exercise his little Wit against the Doctrine of a Resurrection, which his Vices make him afraid to find true. This is it which makes such an one so slow of Heart to believe all that our Saviour and his Apostles have

spoken, that he may indulge himself in his wicked Course without any Terrour or Remorse. As the Apostle observ'd in his Time, so may we still, that there are some Men who will say, *How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?* These Men can't understand how that Carcass of ours, which after a short time is reduc'd to Ashes and dispers'd, can ever be made perfect again in all its parts, and receive its due Proportion? Especially when the Bodies of several Men are devour'd by Fishes, and those Fishes eaten by other Men, and so what was the Substance of one Man passes and conduces to the Nutriment of another. But how weak is this, when oppos'd to Almighty Power? Can we imagine that that God who call'd us out of nothing, and gave us our Being at the first, is not able to reunite, and build up again the work of his own hands? He saw our Substance yet being imperfect, and in his Book *were all our Members written*, which Day by Day were fashioned; when as yet there were none of them. And do we think that this All-powerful Creator cannot assign to every single Body its own Particles again? The ingenious Artist, we see can take his Watch in pieces, and afterwards set it in better Order than it was before. And sure an Omnipotent God can much more easily bring it to pass that this very corruptible *shall put on Incorruption, and this mortal put on Immortality*. How trifling are those little Niceties of enquiring whether the Body shall be the same in every the smallest and most minute Particle; when in that Sense, our Bodies are not the same for a minute together. We have a continual Vicissitude of Emission and Reception of Particles; some we send forth by Perspiration and receive others by Nutriment, but still we call our Body the same, for as much as the general Substance remains. We are not therefore to raise

raise unpertinent Cavils and improfitable Question. *Tho' Worms destroy this Body, yet in our Flesh shall we see God.* Its true our Bodies shall no longer be subject to the weakness and infirmity of this frail mortal Life. They shall not hunger or thirst any more : *But we shall be as the Angels of God in Heaven.* The glorious Nature of this Change, and those Qualifications which shall follow from thence, is what we (who as yet *see thro' a Glass darkly*) do not at present understand : Neither is it necessary that we shou'd. Its sufficient for us that God has declar'd that we shall rise to a State of eternal Happiness, unless we hinder it by our own defaults, unless we obstinately run upon those insupportable Torments, which our gracious God did not intend for us, but for the Devil and his Angels. Our Saviour says that the Blessed Children of his Father *shall receive the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the World.* And it was the thoughts of this transcendent Glory and Happiness which made St. Paul desirous to *depart, and to be with Christ.* And had we but the same due Sense of these Things, and were accordingly prepared to *die the Death of the righteous,* we should not be so fond of the Enjoyments of this present World ; we should not think of a continuing City here, but seek for one to come. We should consider that it is better for us to be in Spiritual Joy and Felicity, than continue subject to the Miseries of this sinful World. Since those good Men who depart hence in the Lord, and are deliver'd from the burthen of the Flesh are immediately in a State of bliss, tho' that State do not receive its accomplishment till the general Judgment, yet since they begin immediately after their Deaths to have a taste of the joys of Heaven, and *rest from their labours,* we should, surely, upon a due Sense of the Happiness of this Change, and a fit Preparation for it, desire to *die the Death of the righteous,*

righteous, and not think our last End cou'd come too soon, if we had the chearful Hope that it would be like His. How great an Encouragement does the Christian Religion gives us against the fear of Death, when we know that the Sting of it is taken away by our Triumphant Redeemer, and are sensible *that while we are at Home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord*, as St. Paul expresses it, (2. Cor. 5. 6.) It was the Consideration of this which animated that great Apostle, and his Fellow-labourers; and made them bear up against all Adversities with undaunted Bravery and Christian Resolution. They knew very well *that those light Afflictions which were but for a moment, would work for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*. While we sojourn in this vale of Tears and Sorrow, we are detain'd from the blessed Sight and Enjoyment of God; and kept from the Happiness of *just Men made perfect*. But no sooner is the pious Christian freed from these terrestrial Bonds, but he is in Joy and Felicity, and his Soul has a more enlarg'd sense than here it could have, of the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God. And here we may remark the falsity of their Opinion who think that the Soul is in a dream or sleep till the general Resurrection. The Body indeed, as lying in the Grave, is said to sleep; but the Soul is a Spiritual and active Being which never dies; *but when it is absent from the Body is present with the Lord*. And this is the Encouragement which our Religion gives us against the natural fear of Death. Were we to fall into a State of Insensibility, that cou'd be no great Incitement to us to desire a departure hence: Whereas he who knows that there is an immediate reward *for those who die in the Lord*, will have no great reluctancy to go, when he is call'd to rest from his labour. And he who acknowledges this weighty and important Truth; who believes that

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tho' he die he shall live again will have great reason to take care how he lives here; and all the days of his appointed time to wait till his change come. Which was the 2d Thing I propos'd to consider and exhort you to.

God Almighty has here set Life and Death before us, and according to our Demeanour here shall we be rewarded hereafter. *The Wrath of God is reveal'd against all Unrighteousness; and Tribulation and anguish denounc'd against every Soul of Man that doth Evil: But those shall inherit Eternal Life, who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for Glory and Honour and Immortality.* When therefore we have so much Business upon our Hands, as the guarding against all the assaults of the World, the flesh and the Devil, let us watch and pray, laying aside every weight, and those darling Sins which do so easily beset us. We must be sober, vigilant and industrious in running the race that is set before us. We must put on the whole Armour of God that we may be able to stand in the day of Battle; and vanquish the grand Enemies of our eternal Welfare. We must be good Stewards of the manifold Grace of God, who will one day, call us to an account, How we have spent the Talent; and if we have been unprofitable Servants, will appoint us our Portion, where there is weeping and gnashing of Teeth. Seeing therefore we know these things, let us pass all the Days of our appointed Time, in waiting till our change come: In examining our own Hearts with all diligence; and calling our ways to remembrance; that so we may, by judging our selves here, learn to amend, and avoid the terrible Judgment hereafter.

And indeed did Men but frequently meditate upon Death, had they the Wisdom seriously to consider their latter End, it wou'd surely restrain them, from the commission of Vice. If a Man wou'd but thus reason with himself before he proceeds

ceeds to Action, it wou'd surely deter him from Evil. Whatever I think, say or do, I must give an account for, at the Bar of Gods Judgment; Shall I therefore approve of any Wickedness, or attempt the Commission of it, when I know not but this may be my last Hour, and God may require my Soul of me without any delay? How then shall I dare to plead with him, if I die in any Sin unrepented of? Without Repentance it is Presumption to hope for Pardon or Remission; and if I offend God knowingly and wilfully, against the Motions of his holy Spirit, and the Checks of my own Conscience, how can I tell whether he will give me either Grace or Time to repent? I'm sure I cannot challenge either at his Hands; but having provok'd his Indignation may rather justly expect that he should forth-with snatch me away, with all my sins upon my Head, and root me out of the Land of the living.

But so little do Men wait *till their change come*, that they seldom think of it till they are ready to undergo it; Tho' a Death-bed Repentance be one of the most deplorable Objects in the World. Were we but sensible of the Horrour and Anxiety which a Person in those Circumstances labours under, we should not certainly be so egregiously foolish and indiscreet our selves, as to incur the hazard and danger of the like Condition. In such cases like sinking Men who are ready to lay hold upon a Bulrush; the dying and languishing Sinner is earnest to enquire of the Spiritual Guide if there be no hopes remaining, and indeed I think there cannot be any Ground for much. We do not know indeed, how far God Almighty may be pleas'd to extend his Mercy; but this we know that if we wou'd enter into life, we must keep his Commandments; and our Saviour tells

tells us that, *Not every one who calleth him Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he who doth the will of his Father which is in Heaven. Herein are manifested the Children of God and the Children of the Devil, says St. John, he who doth not righteousness is not of God.* If we would know therefore whether we are in a state of Grace and favour with God, and may reasonably hope for Eternal Salvation we must examine our Selves, and see whether our Lives have been conformable to the Gospel; whether we have walk'd worthy of the vocation wherewith we were called: *Whether we have Fought the good fight; for unless we have so done, there is little reason to expect the Crown of Righteousness; for he who has the hopes of that, must purify himself, and endeavour as far as in him lies, to be perfect, as his Father which is in heaven is perfect.* We are told without a life of holiness *no Man shall see the Lord; and if the Righteous scarcely be sav'd, Where shall the ungodly and the Sinner appear?* What reason therefore has a Man to hope for Salvation who has not taken any care for his Soul, till the time of his departure is at hand. Indeed if a Man has been so imprudent to neglect Repentance till then, yet then let him set about it with speed, because it may, be better late than not at all. And God, who knows the Secrets of all Hearts will know what Allowances to make; and to his infinite Mercy we must leave the Death-bed Penitent. He can indeed turn the Heart in a Moment, and save us at the last hour, as he did the *Thief on the Cross*; but such Cases are extraordinary; and we have no reason to expect that God should go out of the ordinary methods of his Dispensations when we have slighted Mercy already, and done despite to the Spirit of God, and the Covenant of Grace.

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Such a Case as the penitent Thief on the Cross can never happen again; let not that therefore be an Encouragement to us to continue in Evil Practices, and delay the necessary Duty of Reformation and Amendment; but let us remember that tho' one Thief repented, yet the other dy'd in his Sins. When we have despis'd the Goodness of God which shou'd have led us to repentance, we have no reason to hope that God will afford us the Assistance of his holy Spirit; but may more justly conclude that he will give us up to the hardness and impenitency of our Hearts; and since we have *treasur'd up unto our selves wrath against the Day of wrath*, we have reason to dread lest it fall heavy upon us. *Let us therefore fear the Lord whilest it is call'd to Day, that we may not be hardned through the deceitfulness of Sin*; but that it may go well with us at the last, and that we may find favour in the Day of our death. We have here an Object of Mortality before our Eyes; and therefore cannot forbear thinking how soon it may be our own Case. But let us not think it enough to spend an Hour on the thoughts of the Grave, and then forget it as soon as we have buried our dead out of our Sight. Let every one here present live so warily and circumspectly, as if he were to be the next, that must lie down in the dust. God knows who shall be so among us; but its certain a few Years will bring us all to it: *For Man that is born of a Woman, hath but a short time to live; and what is our Life but a Vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away?* James 4. 14.) Seeing then that we are to give an Account for things done in this Body, and tho' we die yet must we live again, let us be in continual Preparation to part with the things of this World; We know not how soon our Lord may appear, let us therefore speedily provide Oyl in our Lamps, with the wise Virgins,

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to attend him; and all the Days of our appointed time let us wait till our change come.

And now 3dly. I shall in few words apply myself to the present Occasion.

I am sensible that in Performances of this Nature, it is generally expected that the Person employ'd shou'd dilate upon the Commendations of the deceas'd.

But I am sure, She, whose Remains are now before us, when She made choice of me for this mournful Office, had no Sinister Intentions of her own Applause. I'm sensible She had learn'd of her great Master *to be meek and lowly in Heart*, and therefore desir'd this my poor Tribute, to be a *Memento* for the advantage of the living, and not an Encomium for the dead. And for this Reason I doubt not but She will be thought the more worthy of Commendation and esteem.

Did I think my self capable of doing Justice to her Memory, by any of my mean Productions, yet I shou'd judge that Office partly superseded; for as much as a great part of those who are here assembled, had the Happiness of so good an Example; were Witnesses of her Christian Conversation, and know how well her own Works praise her in the Gates. Know how well she behav'd her self; whether we consider as a Wife, a Mother, or a Friend. In the two first Respects, how tender and Affectionate; In the last, how affable and courteous to all that convers'd with her. What too many are apt to be puff'd up with the thoughts of, Namely, the Springing from a considerable Family and Relations, was so far from producing Pride or Ostentation in the deceased, that it only serv'd to give a distinguishing Character to her Meekness and Condescension. She was sensible that it was far better to give a Lustre to, than derive it from ones Ancestors. She was sensible, that none are

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truly noble or great, but the Pious and the Good; and that in the Christian Account before Honour is Humility. For these Reasons (and I doubt not but many more might be urg'd) the loss of her Conversation cannot but be deeply lamented by those who are related to her. But then to alleviate their Sorrows, let them consider that such Persons are the fittest for a better State, and that therefore *we ought not to be sorry as some Men, without hope, for them that sleep in Christ*; for with respect to them the Day of their Death is better than the Day of their Birth. Indeed that to the vertuous and good, is the Day of a new Birth of endless Glory and Happiness; tho' they depart from our *Horizon*, it is only to rise in the other with a greater Lustre. But why shou'd I by my weak Attempts do wrong to so good a Subject? Especially when, in this Case, the best Oratory is but superfluous. A good Example expresses it self in the best manner; and without being beholden to Word; as long as there are Minds capable of good Impressions, the Memory of the righteous will remain.

To conclude therefore, may we, who survive, learn by good Examples, to prepare our selves for that Solemn Time *when this corruptible must put on Incorruption*; and as we have born the Image of the earthly we shall also bear the Image of the Heavenly. By so doing, we shall best answer the Design of such Discourses as these; and attain the best and most inestimable Reward. Which that we may finally be Partakers of, God of his Infinite Mercy grant, through the Merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*



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